

Hon. Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress



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HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

Preserving Security for Aging Americans

An aging national population makes it more important than ever for our country's health-care system to be equipped to care for a new generation of seniors. *Approximately 383,000 people in Sacramento are over the age of 50, more than a quarter of the population.* This underscores the critical need for health insurance reform not only to strengthen Medicare, but to guarantee the availability of reliable and quality care for all people as they age.

Health insurance reform does so:

- **MAKES PRESCRIPTION DRUGS MORE AFFORDABLE FOR MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES:** Health insurance reform will close the infamous Medicare Part D "donut hole," which is a nickname for the policy that forces millions of seniors to pay the full price of their Part D-covered drugs once they reach a certain spending threshold. *Sacramento's 7,900 Part D beneficiaries who hit the "donut hole" every year will see huge costs savings as a result.*
- **PROVIDES COVERAGE FOR EARLY RETIREES:** One of the first things that health insurance reform will do is create a re-insurance program to help offset the costs of expensive health claims for employers that provide health benefits for retirees between the ages of 55 and 64. This program will operate until the health insurance exchanges are operational, at which point most people in this age bracket will be eligible to purchase health insurance through an exchange.
- **BANS LIFETIME LIMITS ON COVERAGE:** Thanks to health insurance reform, it will be illegal for insurance companies to set lifetime limits on the amount of health-care claims they will pay for their policyholders. People in the later stages of life who are not yet eligible for Medicare are vulnerable to these lifetime caps, which will be banned.
- **KEEPS FAMILIES FROM BANKRUPTCY:** In recent years, Americans age 55 and above have experienced the sharpest rise in bankruptcy filings, many of which are due to the skyrocketing cost of medical care. *Without health insurance reform, as many as 2,000 Sacramento families could go bankrupt as a result of medical debt.*
- **PROTECTS EXISTING MEDICARE BENEFITS AND MAKES THE BASIC MEDICARE BENEFIT BETTER:** By making preventive care free, reducing over-payments to private insurance companies that offer Medicare benefits, and enhancing the ability of beneficiaries to access primary care, health insurance reform strengthens the traditional Medicare program for the present and the future. *In Sacramento, more than 50,000 Medicare beneficiaries will see tangible benefits from these changes.*